

Testimony in favor of HB 5291, to increase the minimum wage

To the Members of the Labor Committee

February 28, 2012

My name is Tanvir Chandlry, and I am writing in support of the increased minimum wage. Minimum wage workers, who come from all parts of society and levels of skill, deserve pay that gives them some financial security.

At my current job, working for Northeast Utilities I am fortunate enough to receive a livable wage. This is hugely important to a new family. Unfortunately, many people in our state are not so fortunate. I can tell from personal experience that the current minimum wage is not enough to live on, let alone raise a family.

Putting myself through school, I worked in fast food restaurants for two and a half years, and at a major retail chain for more than three. All of these jobs paid minimum wage. I was fortunate to be single at the time, as the money I earned was not even enough to cover just my own living expenses. Having to chose between paying the electricity bill, or paying for dinner, or buying new shoes to replace old ones was difficult. Supporting a family at that level of income would have been more than impossible.

It should also be clear that none of the work I did for minimum wage equipped me with skills or experience relevant to my current career. Many in the media have tried to paint minimum wage work as a "stepping stone" to a better career for teenagers and the inexperienced or under-qualified. This is absolutely untrue. The only advancement or raise in pay possible from a job at McDonald's would be the 40 cents an hour I'd make as the manager of the same restaurant. Minimum wage jobs are overwhelming held by adults - this is simply the way that one in thirty-three citizens of Connecticut try to stay above water in a difficult economic climate. Currently, most of them are unable to.

Please support the raise in the minimum wage. Not only is it good for Connecticut's families, our state's economy, it is simply the fair thing to do.

Tanvir Chandlry

Vernon, CT

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